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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the life and accomplishments of Arthur Dunn, a pioneer in the field of social studies education. The paper discusses the cooperative community of Dunn's youth, his education and teaching experiences, and his publications on civics and their influence on teaching methods. (BT)

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Arthur Dunn: Civic Visionary From The Heartland

Ruth A. Nieboer, Indiana University

Few people have both a vision, and the opportunity to live it, as clearly as Arthur Dunn did, but then few people are born in a town where "practice what you preach" is the founding principle!

Formative years – 1868 to 1900

Dunn's birthplace of Galesburg, Illinois, was established as a cooperative community, each resident buying a share and contributing his or her talents to the general good. Its first thirty families founded the town based on the notion of members working not for self advancement but for the benefit of all. (Muelder, n.d.) From his youth this impressed Dunn as the best way for communities to function. In his thesis, "An Analysis of the Social Structure of a Western Town: a specimen study according to Small and Vincent's method" published in 1896 by the University of Chicago Press, he says that, "If social diseases are to be in any degree cured, it will come about by an appreciation, on the part of the individual members of society, of the true nature of the social body, of the relation of the individual to the whole, accompanied by an altruistic spirit, which at present is only partially developed in the human race" (Dunn, 1896). The development of this altruistic spirit became the life work of Arthur Dunn.

The proud history of social and political activism which brings pride to Knox College today was already well established when Arthur Dunn attended around 1890.

Rev. George Washington Gale founded it as a manual labor college and outreach of the Oneida Institute. At Oneida, Gale had "educated a large number of young men who become important agitators for several reforms of that day, especially against slavery". Knox's mid 19th century president, Rev. Jonathan Blanchard, was an antislavery orator and an elector for the Free Soil Party. Hiram Revels, later the first black United States Senator, attended Knox. The October 7, 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debate, in which Lincoln first framed his opposition to slavery, was held on this campus. Women attended Knox by 1861 and when, six years later, classes were not yet integrated by gender, the student body rose in protest, their boycott causing the resignation of the college president (Muelder, no date).

These liberal ideas shaped Dunn's understanding of the ideal in human relationships. The concept of the dignity of all people regardless of wealth, national origin, gender or social position, which is evident in his later work, began at Knox. In 1893, Dunn graduated from Knox College with an A.B. ("Dunn Dies," 1927).

That summer he made the short trip up the Illinois Central line which ran through Galesburg to Chicago. Dunn arrived at the height of the Columbian Exposition and enrolled in the fledgling University of Chicago. The university was only two years old when Dunn began his studies as one of only 191 students in the Graduate School of Arts and Literature. The faculty was comprised of a very small but remarkable group of young intellectuals including Albion Small and John Dewey. He began an exploratory

academic career studying in addition to social science, first, history, the next year, zoology, and in his final year, anthropology (Annual Register, 1893, 1894, 1895).

Throughout this time the line between faculty and student blurred as many faculty in one area were students in another. Dunn is recorded as a Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in 1899-1900, (J. Satterfield, University of Chicago archivist, personal communication, January 26, 2000) and an extension instructor in the university's outreach program which taught practical skills in neighborhood settings including Hull House. (Knox archives)

During the last year of his enrollment in University of Chicago, Dunn was also enrolled at Knox College and was on the faculty there. He received his master's degree from Knox in 1896 and in August of the same year married Elizabeth W. Boggs, a minister's daughter and, also, a Knox graduate (B. Niehus, Knox College archivist, personal communication, January 26, 2000).

Though he did not obtain a degree from University of Chicago, he retained an association with the school through 1900 when he was a Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. (J. Satterfield, University of Chicago archivist, personal communication, January 26, 2000). The years in Chicago broadened his understanding of community life from that of the liberal but small Galesburg and the surrounding rural area to one of the largest metropolises of the world. This understanding, and empathy for

the inhabitants of family farms, intellectual communities, and urban tenements was developed during these years.

Forming a theory from practice – 1900 to 1914

In 1900 the Dunns moved to Indianapolis and the job which was to play a pivotal role in Arthur's professional future. He began working at Shortridge High School as a history teacher. It must have been a frustrating time for this idealistic 32 year old. Just five years later, he wrote his first article published in the April edition of *Educational Review*. In this article he defended the place of history as a potentially demanding subject that required better instructional methods. He believed that history was sometimes thought to be a "snap" because it was taught through texts and lectures by what he referred to as "the mathematical method" of acquiring facts. Instead, he felt that history should be taught by the methods of science in which inquiry and the formation of judgements were the main goals. "Where the effort of the pupil in history should come in is in following out the suggestions derived from the text-book and from the discussion of the class, in looking up original sources, in consulting special histories, in ascertaining the varying views of different authorities, in studying and making maps, in systemizing and comparing data, and in forming judgements" (Dunn, 1905, p. 415). He proposed two new conditions for the study of history. "In the first place, there must be an historical laboratory (call it library, if you wish), where each pupil may find his place, with ample table room and drawer, or other arrangement, for notebook, writing and drawing

materials, where they would be easily accessible to him, and also to the teacher on occasion. There must be ample equipment of books, maps, and other things useful in the study of history.... In the second place, there must be, in the arrangement of the pupil's program, provision for regular laboratory periods, as in the case of science pupils, when each pupil shall report for systematic work under the supervision, so far as possible, of an attendant, preferably of a history-teacher or assistant" (Dunn, 1905, p. 417). His vision of the teacher as a leader not a lecturer and the student as an investigator and active participant in learning is evident.

By 1907 he had become the Head of the Department of History and Civics (Dunn, 1907). The following year and until leaving Indianapolis in 1910, while still assigned to the Shortridge History Department, he was also the Director of Civics in all schools (C. Vance, Teacher's Library, Indianapolis Public Schools, personal communication, January 26, 2000). In this capacity he was able to institute the program of community civics and involvement that became the foundation of the "new civics".

In 1906, Dunn published his first textbook, Civics: the Community and the Citizen, for the Indianapolis civics program. It stressed the reciprocal responsibilities of the government and its citizens. Active citizenry and practical community service projects became the norm in Indianapolis schools under this plan.

The philosophy and text were so well received that a year after its local publication in 1906 it was published for national distribution by D.C. Heath. The

California State Board of Education published it the same year with the addition of state specific information for use throughout their system.

The first sentence of the preface to the 1907 edition links this work to the educational philosophy learned at the University of Chicago. There he cited, as in all his later works, the words of John Dewey from *Ethical Principles Underlying Education*, "Training for citizenship is formal and nominal unless it develops the power of observation, analysis, and inference with respect to what make up a social situation and the agencies through which it is modified" (Dunn, 1907, p. iii). He also acknowledges Professor Albion W. Small and George E. Vincent in helping him form his theories of society (p. v). The text is a reflection of his own belief that, "The function of the public school is to produce a good type of citizenship. There is no other sanction for the existence of the public school" (p. iii). He means to "arouse the pupil's consciousness of the meaning of community life and of his relations to it.... To make a vivid impression upon the consciousness of the pupil... [and] leave him with an eager desire to know more" (p. iv).

Chapter titles emphasize the relationship between the community and the citizen, for example: "How the community aids the citizen to satisfy his desire for health", "How the citizens of a community govern themselves," and "The relation between the community and the citizen in business life" (Dunn, 1907, p. ix). He continually emphasizes practical inquiry into the working of the student's local community, linking it

with the functions of government in general, and admonishes students in their responsibilities. "The community has a right to expect more from an educated man than from an uneducated one; more from a high school graduate than from one who has not attended high school" (p. 127-8). Later, "it is every citizen's supreme duty to keep himself informed in regards to political matters, and to take an active part in securing good government (p. 186).

Writing this text facilitated the development of civics programs across the country while helping Dunn analyze his beliefs and formulate a clear theory of civic action. He expressed the belief that, "if civic education means the cultivation of qualities of good citizenship, doing something is really more important than instruction or discussion. It is through activity that habits are formed, interest kindled and maintained, initiative stimulated, and judgement developed" (Dunn, 1915, p. 406)

During this period he expressed his understanding that citizenship was constitutionally conferred on all members of American society equally regardless of age, wealth, ethnicity, or gender and that, consequently, all groups should be educated for full citizenship. In 1913 he made a speech on civic education before the Round Table Luncheon in Toronto. A previous speaker, Miss Connolly, had commented on the irony that "training for citizenship is in the hands of non-citizens", meaning women teachers who did not at that time have the vote. He amended his speech to include the following:

> One of the greatest mistakes that we have been making in training for citizenship has been in assuming that we are training the children to be citizens sometime in the future, instead of training them to be citizens now. The children are citizens, and their women teachers are citizens, not only by a broad acceptance of the term, but by the Constitutional definition. The task of the teacher is not to make citizens out of non-citizens, but to cultivate the young citizen, whose present civic relations are comparatively simple, into the fullness of civic life. To give the child the idea that citizenship consists merely in the right or power to vote, and that until that right is possessed there can be no citizenship, is doing him, or her, a grievous injury, and is doing the community a grievous injury since it causes the growing citizen to believe that he will have no privileges or obligations of citizenship until he shall possess the right to vote.
>
> Even from the standpoint of the woman suffragist, it would seem that the position of the woman teacher would be much stronger if the children under her care were impressed with the truth that she, like themselves, is a citizen, and as a citizen is looking forward to the time when she may possess the additional privilege and obligations of the suffrage (Dunn, 1913).

He worked briefly in civic education in Philadelphia, where he met Jessie Evans, and New York City, thus broadening his experience with urban life during the great European immigration (Knox archives).

Speaking around the country and writing for publications like *The Boston Globe* he more tightly formulated his theory of civic education. In 1914, for example, he delivered an address entitled, "By what standards shall we judge the value of civic education?" In it he sets forth the goals of civic education and reiterates his belief that children are citizens and the purpose of civic education is to cultivate the characteristics and interests appropriate in a good citizen (Dunn, 1914).

He joined the U.S. Bureau of Education in 1914. There he quickly published his ideas through the bureau—first, in *Civic Education in Elementary Schools as Illustrated*

in Indianapolis, a review of his work there, and in chapter 18 of the *Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1914* he outlined six tendencies of civic education (Dunn, 1915).

First, civic education was expanding beyond the basic of civic knowledge to encompass "the development of power to organize...one's own experience,... judgement... civic intelligence... civic action... personal responsibility... power of initiative... cooperation" (Dunn, 1915, p. 402). Second, civic education must begin in the early years. He spoke of it as a "process of growth" adapted to each individual. He saw civics as a, "means by which the school may give organized training for intelligent participation in civic life" (p. 403). He also proposed that civic education be extended beyond the schools to other agencies. Finally, he felt it should have the characteristic of participation in civic activities.

> If civic education means the cultivation of qualities of good citizenship, doing something is really more important than instruction or discussion. It is through activity that habits are formed, interest kindled and maintained, initiative stimulated, and judgement developed" (p. 406).

This document links his work in Indianapolis (p. 410) with his plans for action at the Bureau in teacher education (p. 412) and vocational schools (p. 415).

In 1915 he began work on the NEA Social Studies Committee and published, with J. Lynn Barnard, F.W. Carrier, and Clarence D. Kingsley, *The Teaching of Community Civics.*

The Social Studies in Secondary Education – 1916 Report

Dunn's impact on the 1916 Report was felt in four areas.

First, *Civics for Years VII-IX* was developed from the more extensive paper issued in 1915 by a subcommittee of four, which included Arthur Dunn (Barnard, 1915). That document quoted frequently from six of Dunn's previous publications. It focused on the civic ideals and classroom practices which he developed in Indianapolis -- ideals which shine through this sequence of study.

Second, his ideas are seen in the *Culminating Course for Grade 12*. While the committee supported the idea of a culminating course of social studies in the last year of the high school they could not come to consensus on its nature. They included their dilemma in the report where Dunn's ideas about practical, community-based projects of importance to society were strongly urged.

Third, the section called *Standards by which to Test Methods* is extracted, with citation, directly from the address given and published by Dunn in 1914.

Fourth, in the segment labeled *Availability of Text Materials* the committee members acknowledge the lack of a variety of textbooks to support civic education. The report suggests, however, that alternative materials developed by community groups and government agencies might be utilized readily by well trained teachers. Such materials were already being developed under Dunn's supervision at the Bureau of Education.

The 1916 Report is now considered a foundational work in the field of social studies. In the introduction to the ERIC reprint of this report, Shirley Engle said that , "It outlined a content for the social studies which was widely adopted and has remained remarkably unchanged to this day" (Nelson, 1994). It established civics education as the focus of this integrated discipline and owes much to the vision of Arthur Dunn.

Dunn's continued work at the Bureau of Education, which lasted until 1920, and his private publishing supported the ideals set forth in the 1916 Report.

Working with others, he produced practical materials for classroom teachers. *Lessons in Community and National Life* was published by the Bureau of Education in 1918. They were designed for three levels, upper classes of high school, first class of high school and the upper grades of the elementary, and the intermediate grades of elementary school. A total of 24 lessons per level came out of the Bureau over a period of 8 months. These lessons were written under the direction of Charles H. Judd, director of the School of Education of the University of Chicago and Leon C. Marshall, dean of the School of Commerce and Administration also of University of Chicago. All contributors were associated with this university, as was Arthur Dunn. The Bureau also produced Teachers' Leaflet No. 9 for 1920 entitled *Lessons in Civics for the Three Primary Grades of City Schools*. Written by Hannah Margaret Harris this leaflet was closely related to a book which she and Arthur Dunn co-authored the previous year entitled Citizenship in School and Out: the first six years of school life.

Hannah Margaret Harris' acknowledgments tell us that this book is a collaboration, but Dunn's introduction indicates a cooperating, perhaps only supporting role. Certainly Dunn's name which appears first on the title page was well known and may have been used by his publishers, D.C. Heath, to make the book more saleable. This text does not encourage active citizenship and community service but espouses a child-centered transmission model. Whether this difference is due to the intended audience or a different theoretical base is uncertain. Both Dunn and Harris refer to the 1916 Report and the writings of Dewey and Dunn as the theoretical basis for their work. They, also, acknowledge their association with Clarence D. Kingsley in Massachusetts and on the NEA committee (Dunn and Harris, 1919).

World War I and a vision of service – 1916 to 1927

Dunn's work after World War I grew in three directions.-- the revision of community from local to global, the use of civics to Americanize recent immigrants, and the importance of service in the community.

Events surrounding WWI confirmed Dunn's idea that citizens could work together to improve the world community. In the introduction to Citizenship in School and Out: the first six years of school life Dunn writes

> In the fierce light which a world-wide war has shed upon all social institutions, certain features half hidden before in the shadow of custom are now plainly discernible, and shapes before but vaguely seen through the mists of speculation

> are at last revealed in bold and clear cut outline. Among the institutions whose purposes and work are being thus seen anew the public school looms large (Dunn, 1920, p.1).

Work in support of the war effort and relief work to assist refugees and cities recovering from conflict was done by a wide variety of community organizations. He saw the work of the Junior Red Cross, with whom Hannah Harris worked, in particular as an example of the kind of civic involvement advocated in his earlier work and re-visioned the concept of community.

As a consequence, in the early twenties, Dunn wrote a new series of three textbooks: Community Civics, written for a general audience, Community Civics for City Schools and Community Civics and Rural Life. His dedication to the relevance of topics to the lives of children is demonstrated in these later volumes. "Training for citizenship in a democracy is a fundamentally identical process in all communities, whether urban or rural. But, if it really functions in the life of the citizen, this process must consist largely in deriving educational values from the actual civic situations in which he normally finds himself" (Dunn, 1920c, p. iii).

In Community Civics and Rural Life citizen-community relationships were illustrated with information about the Department of Agriculture's extension services for homemakers and farmers, the preservation of farm land by the U.S. Reclamation Service, the importance of good roads and communication systems, the increased availability of high school education in rural areas, and the development of farming cooperatives. He

also demonstrated the interdependence of rural and urban communities in the larger national and, even, international community. The text was also somewhat more independent of the school laboratory, which he had previously proposed, since the 1916 Report placed civics in the junior high school where such facilities as he had envisioned might not be practically available (Dunn, 1920c, p. vi).

In Community Civics for City Schools the focus was on teamwork in industry and the reciprocal relationship of management and labor. He proposed discussion of labor relations, unions, boycotts, and the public trust of business. He emphasized the obligation of citizens to understand and participate in government even when it seems large and impersonal and challenges bureaucrats to make their offices accessible to the citizens they serve. He also reemphasized the intimate relationship between the rural and urban community which rely on each other in economic endeavors (Dunn, 1921c).

These books were not only well received but, according to Bertha Buell who reviewed social science texts in The Historical Outlook in June of 1923, were "unexcelled". She praised Dunn as a pioneer in the field of civics texts.

> In 1907 there appeared in the book market a small plain-looking volume whose author, with proper deference to the memory of John Wycliffe, may be called the Morning Star of the Civic Reformation. Surely it is no mean thing to set in motion forces that bid fair to vitalize the interpretation of Social Science for the children of America. This credit belongs properly to Arthur William Dunn, formerly of the Indianapolis public schools and for several years connected with the Federal Bureau of Education. His little book, "The Community and the Citizen," was the first of its kind and is probably responsible for the phrase

"Community Civics," which now usually designates the "new civics" (Buell, 1923, p. 227).

These books contain two significant additions which show the influence of the war years and his broadened vision. First, chapters seven and eight of these twenty eight chapter texts, are entitled 'Our National Community' and 'A World Community.' Only after establishing this broadened view does he discuss the particulars of the interrelated and mutually supportive responsibilities of citizens within a community. Second, he begins to speak specifically of service as a necessity for the health of a community. He speaks of "the spirit of service, service for the common good." "The patriotic citizen is one whose conduct at all times is controlled by the thought of the service he may render rather than by the thought of selfish advantage" (Dunn, 1921c, p. 57).

The Americanization of recent immigrants was a concern in the early twenties. At the 1921 Annual Meeting of the NEA several speakers addressed this issue. Arthur Dunn was among them. He felt that language acquisition and adjustment to new customs were not the only things needed by new Americans. He felt that they also needed to understand the American spirit to be more than European transplants. The new civics in which students made work in their communities a part of their education was what was needed. At that conference he said, "If there is one idea that Americanization should implant firmly in the mind and heart either of Young America or of the immigrant, it is that service – mutual exchange of service, team work in service for the common good – is

the very foundation of normal community life in a democracy, and the commanding ideal of true Americanism" (Dunn, 1921a). He saw unselfish service to others as the chief element of patriotism (Dunn, n.d.b).

The idealistic dreamer from Galesburg saw the lessons of his hometown magnified and vulcanized by the world wide war. Arthur Dunn had reached middle age with even greater conviction in the importance of cooperation. In a speech given sometime after the war he listed the three factors which the war demonstrated could make our society efficient: team work which submerged differences and coordinated effort, common purpose in which effort is focused on one goal of benefit to all, and the notion that every man counts and can be of meaningful service to the whole (Dunn, n.d.c).

These factors eventually coalesced into the ideal of service to others as the most important of civic virtues. Working cooperatively was an important theme from the first of Dunn's writings but now, re-visioned as service, it became the most important of civic virtues. "Education becomes the chief bulwark of freedom," he said in a speech given sometime after 1922, "only when it fixes ineffaceably in our minds the ideal of service as the master key to the adjustment of human interests and activities" (Dunn, n.d.d).

Dunn's amplified ideal of service was not just rhetoric. Immediately after the war he began practical efforts to bring this new emphasis into schools. Teacher's Leaflet No. 8 for 1920 was titled *Civic Training Through Service* and was authored by Dunn in his capacity as Specialist in Civic Education. In it he outlined the achievements of some

12,000,000 young Americans belonging to the Junior Red Cross during WWI. This organization, operating in schools across the country, had participated in productive activities such as making garments, toys, furniture for refugees, and philanthropic activities whose income went to the relief of unfortunate children worldwide. They also arranged locally beneficial projects like traveling libraries, clean-up campaigns and beautification programs (Dunn, 1920a).

Next he proposed a new postwar role for this organization in promoting citizenship in schools. The plan, endorsed by the Junior Red Cross and the National Education Association, followed the same basic principles that Dunn had always espoused. "If civic training in the schools is to be made vital, it must start with the basic fact of the present citizenship of boys and girls" (Dunn, 1920a, p. 5). He believed that the program should be built on service that counts, learning to do by doing, accepted educational doctrine, and after-war opportunities. He believed that real, worthwhile projects could be conducted in the schools for which students would receive school credit. To be eligible the project must be "1) eminently worth while, 2) deal with an actual situation or problem, 3) employ investigation, 4) be accompanied by necessary reports, data, and notes on required readings, 5) show an economical method of procedure" (p. 7). He outlined the Junior Red Cross Plan that showed that the organization was perfectly fitted for service to the schools in providing for civic education. The plan included:

I. An administrative organization to organize and administer a wide range of activities.

II. A program of activities to make it a real program of civic training through service. The program of activities would be a flexible one, not only leaving room, but positively providing, for adaptation to local conditions and opportunities. It would, however, embrace productive activities, philanthropic activities, and miscellaneous activities.

III. An interchange of school correspondence to cultivate not only a broad human sympathy, but also an Americanism with a world perspective. Putting students around the world in touch on a personal level could provide a cohesive spirit to bind the world community.

IV. The Junior Red Cross News, a publication of the organization that could make available materials to vitalize school studies such as information on language, geography, history, etc., that supports the creation of a world community.

V. Outlines of civic training and instruction developed by the Bureau of Education. Graded outlines of courses of civic training and instruction and series of carefully developed projects which could be followed by teachers across the country.

VI. Service through conservation and thrift which he envisioned as a cooperative effort of the Federal Bureau of Education, the United States Treasury Department, and other interested agencies.

VII. Community recognition of civic achievement to promote the work of citizens who make their citizenship real through full participation in civic life (p. 7-13).

One year later Arthur Dunn addressed the National Education Association as the Associate National Director of the Junior Red Cross (Dunn, 1921a). By the following year, and until his death in 1927, he was its director.

Seeds of Service Learning

It was during this post-war period that Dunn put together his idea of cooperation and teamwork with service to the community and the learning of the mechanisms of government and what he saw as the American ideal of community at home and abroad.

Speaking before a group in New Jersey in 1920 at the invitation of S. B. Howe, a member of the NEA Committee on the Social Studies, he put it all together. He felt the education of a child from his/her entry into school through to the twelfth grade made him/her "fit for service", acquiring all the skills and habits which made a person a useful member of society. In the twelfth year he recalls for the listener the culminating course recommended in the 1916 Report which he felt should be a service project.

> If there is one lesson more than another that the young citizen needs to learn, it is that service, mutual service, teamwork in service, is the very foundation of normal community life in a democracy.

Yet, he said service was appropriate in schools only under very specific circumstances.

> Only to the extent that the object has worth; and second, only to the extent that they contribute positively to the effectiveness of the schools' proper work, enrich the regular courses of study, and train the pupils in and for civic usefulness (Dunn, n.d.b).

The first project to be labeled "service-learning", according to Stanton, Giles and Cruz's book, Service-Learning: a Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future, was that of Bill Ramsay and Bob Sigmon in 1965. This university level program linked the learning and development of students at the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies with a community development project in Tennessee. The students learned about the functioning of the federal governments and the programs of its agencies while assisting local residents find solutions to local problems (Stanton, 1999). The project is a Dunn classic. This book on the pioneers of service-learning does not cite Arthur Dunn but his theory shines through the work of those it does cite. In fact, one of the older pioneers, Joan Schine traces her interest to public service activities in school in the 1930s.

Arthur Dunn's contribution to the social studies has been great. From the vision he developed in the idealism of his Midwestern home and college experience, to his practical work in the field of education and the highly regarded 1916 Report, the views which culminated in service to the world community, and the foundation he laid for service-learning, Arthur Dunn developed an ethos of civic responsibility and community service which remains a challenge for educators today.